

THE DAILY STAR

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THE STAR PUBLISHING CO.,

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PRINCE BISMARCK states clearly that the alliance between Russia, Austria and Germany is complete, and that it is the determination of Emperor William to retain the friendship of Russia.

THE loss of life by the burning of the Brooklyn theater last night, proves to have been terrible. Up to this time it is estimated at forty-eight. Thirty-three dead bodies have been taken out and the sickening work goes on.

QUAIL on toast, fine wines and an excellent spread generally, to a Council Committee having an important matter under consideration, as witnessed yesterday, is not just the thing. We pass no opinion, at this stage, on the merits of the permission asked; but quail on toast, to public officials, is one of the difficulties that the country is trying to rally from, and several of our dignitaries did us and themselves no credit yesterday.

THE Postmaster General, as a disseminator of news, is a failure. Copies of his Report were in this city ready for delivery when the Message was sent in, but orders were issued that they should not be given to the press till instructions to do so were received from him. We had the Message by telegraph for use a day ahead of the Report of the Postmaster General. The other Reports delivered through the Custom-house came promptly to hand.

FROM almost every State Capital we have news of the assembling of the Electors to cast the vote for President and Vice President of the United States. The story is precisely the same from every place and hardly worth repeating, as the public is familiar with the political complexion of each representation in the Electoral College, where the matter has been definitely settled. In South Carolina, Louisiana and Florida, each, two sets of Electors assemble, and votes from each will be transmitted to Congress.

THE MESSAGE.

The last annual message of President Grant was sent to Congress yesterday. It is a fair State paper, rather above than below the average, and bears unmistakable evidence of embodying the opinions if not of being entirely the work of the President.

The probability is that there was not a word of truth in all the talk about its being written by Cushing and revised by Secretary Fish. The opening acknowledgment of mistakes and errors, which the executive traces to our system of appointments, is a strong argument in favor of civil service reform, and put in a way that will cause it to be remembered.

In a last message the summing up of the incidents of the administration is natural and not without precedent.

The recommendations and general allusions are in accordance with the policy of his party, and made, evidently, after a full discussion of each topic in the Cabinet. That with reference to the selection of President and Vice President of the United States comes at this time with great force, and will doubtless engage the earnest attention of Congress.

The unfortunate part of the message is the defense of the San Domingo annexation scheme. Whatever the merits of that proposition may have been, the country has long ago passed upon it and passed adversely. It would have been more politic for President Grant at this late day to have refrained from any allusion to it. Taken altogether the message will prove satisfactory to friends, and give ample room for adverse criticism by enemies.

LIBRARY LITERATURE.

A general conference of the Librarians of the United States was held at Philadelphia during the month of October, and representatives were present from nearly all the leading public libraries in the country. Their time was devoted to the consideration of matters immediately concerning libraries and to the discussion of several papers which were read by prominent men in the profession, conspicuous among which was an able essay on *Popular Objections to Public Libraries*, by Mr. W. F. Poole, of the Chicago Public Library, and favorably known to our own people as our former efficient Librarian.

Mr. Poole classified these objections under three heads: 1. The universal dread of taxation. 2. Certain theoretical objections to the establishment of public libraries. 3. As to the kind and quality of books distributed in this manner.

The first two objections were considered at length, and their strong points were ably met by the talented writer, but the third and last objection is the most serious of all, and one that is not so easily to be subdued.

While it is true that our libraries are not established for the exclusive benefit of scholars and men of scientific attainments, it can not be denied by those familiar with the outgrowth and incoming

of free libraries that the mass of reading matter consumed by readers is of that class commonly called "trash." Feeble works of fiction, which emanate from the brains, it is to be presumed, of certain prolific authors, are eagerly snatched up and devoured in rapid succession. A limited number there are whose tastes aspire to standard novels of a higher order, but the great mass of readers cling to their sensational fictions with an intense fervor and are continually crying for more of the same kind. It is useless to tell us that in this way the readers are educated to an appreciation of better books, for the facts do not prove it. The devotee to the shrine of sentimental novels takes no delight in prose fiction of a higher and purer standard, and so long as he is so readily supplied with what his mind craves it is hardly likely that he will. To feed the mind upon such literature is only to increase its appetite for the same, and to shut out from it altogether the influence of any thing better.

The choice of books to be supplied to readers is, however, a difficult matter to regulate in public libraries. This is a subject which should no doubt demand the attention of parents, who are immediately interested in the quality and quantity of reading matter with which their children are furnished. Let them see to it that while they avail themselves of the excellent advantages furnished by our public libraries, they do not acquire such an appetite for the very light literature of the day that their minds will become unfitted for the reception of any other kind.

FRESH FLASHES OF FUN.

Wagon wheels are among the things which go by turns.

No man can tell how big his mind is until it is made up.

Rain is mysterious, but it is easy to see the drift of a snow storm.

"Plaid stockings are coming into vogue." Such a fashion should be checked.

The man who calculated badly is generally left with a cane when he wants an umbrella.

An exchange says: "It is fortunate that the telegraph wires have no conscience." Wire you so certain about that?

The peanut crop this year amounts to eight hundred thousand bushels, and it will be just as difficult as ever to hear anything a lecturer or theater actor says.

The correct pronunciation, sans doubt, of "Sardanapalus" is with the accent on the last syllable but one. Don't you forget it. Almost every one has worn the "nap" of the name by a wrong emphasis.

Nothing will make a restaurant patron, who is a stranger to the dish, crawl out of his boots quicker than his first glance at the dimensions of a plate of "quail on toast," coupled with a look at the bill for the same.

Railroad experts are discussing the subject of the "creeping of railroad rails," but the experience of most men is that the creeping of cordwood sticks, after dark, is a mystery that knocks creeping of rails higher than a kite.

"Fred," said a young man the other day, after listening to his wonderful story, "you know why you are like a harp struck by lightning?" "No," says Fred, "I give it up." "Because a harp struck by lightning is a blasted lyre."

In about a week the bad boys will experience such a change of heart that their parents will be forced to send them to Sunday-school, and the effect on the "spread" of candies at Christmas will be about the same as if the table were struck with a sisson.

We wouldn't mind the cold weather, if it wasn't that the man in an ulster overcoat will begin to jump into a street car like an animated bale of army blankets, and shed an avalanche of snow on the suffering community every time he reaches into his pocket for a nickel.

"What a traveler you have become!" exclaimed a Chicagoan, on meeting an acquaintance at Constantinople. "To tell you the truth," was the frank reply, "I am obliged to run about the world to keep ahead of my character, for the moment it overtakes me I am ruined."

"May they always live in peace and harmony," was the way a Yankee marriage notice should have wound up; but the composer, who couldn't read music, wrote very well, put in type and printed the happy couple by making it read: "May they always live on peas and hominy."

Misguided fellow-man, what is the use of your diving into a halcyon to steal a second-hand overcoat, at great risk of personal liberty, when you can get one for two dollars and a half, and have it overcoat stealer opens as lively this year as ever it did. Are panic prices a temptation for men to be honest?

A correspondent writes us concerning stories of leads having been found imbedded in solid rock, and he wants to know how it was possible for the lead ever to ingratiate himself into such formidable seclusion. Easy enough, he could chisel his way into the rock with his tools. Do you never hear of lead's tools?

"Do fish possess the power of volar?" was debated in a literary society in Utumwa last week, and was decided in the negative. Without making any reference to the grammatical construction of the question, we must say that the decision was absurd. The well known fact that the codfish balls is sufficient to indicate "power of volar."

Times are so hard and money so close that the managers of church fairs have resolved, in pity for a suffering public, to reduce the price of worsted wigs and flannel pincushions to six dollars and thirty cents a piece, while a chance in the prize cake will not cost more than three dollars. Pen-wipers will be absolutely given away at from two to five dollars each.

A Tilden and Hendricks' club in Boston, having secured a band and a drum corps, began to consider the expediency of inviting a band of worsted wigs and flannel pincushions to six dollars and thirty cents a piece, while a chance in the prize cake will not cost more than three dollars. Pen-wipers will be absolutely given away at from two to five dollars each.

RUTH VANE'S VACABOND

BY MARY HAINES.

Sitting on the doorstep, chickies clustering near—"Oh, she is sweet," they said, and had a dear, good hand; from that wee white hand comes all our breakfast, all our dinner and all our supper. Sometimes she carries crumbs in her pocket. Let's look! Tweak! tweak!

"Go down, chickies! You little bethers, are all your lives one strife for food? Look down the meadows there, yellow grass waving and swaying in the wind! See the orchard all bright with fruit, and the glorious tints of the forest!"

"Do you see the sky so clear and blue, chickies, with feathery drifting clouds? Oh, wouldn't we be happy, little peepers, a sailing way up there, with all the world below!"

"Dear little puff-ball, with your black eyes and pink beak, all cuddled up in my two hands, you look just sweet enough to kiss, and pure enough to lick in my sky!—You are the greatest little gourmand that ever I did know. You'd eat me out of dish and pocket; it's all you're good for—all you know. And one of these days you're going to be a great old, clucking hen, like your mother; and—oh, excuse me, sir; what do you wish? My aunt's she's not at home, and uncle is—the dead!"

A rough-looking man, clothes dirty, slouch hat, and disorderly hair, who blushed, cast down his eyes, and confessedly said:

"I called—that is, I am hungry—would like something to eat."

"Very well, sir,"

But how sweet Ruthie Vane's lips curled in scorn, and her bright eyes gave a flash of contempt.

"My aunt never turns those who ask food from her door."

Pie, doughnuts, cold meat, bread and apples.

"I've brought you something, sir, and I would like to tell some advice to you."

"Thank you, I—I—"

"Yes, I understand; we have many such. During the last three weeks, at least ten healthy men have called. Great healthy men, with strong arms, and two good hands, like yours, sir."

"Yes, but—"

"I know, out of work. When the cornfields are growing under their weight, there is plenty to do for those who are doing the work."

"Oh!"—and the man went lower. Oh, it Ruthie could have seen the black eyes sparkling beneath—"I've a wife and six small children, miss, all dependent on me."

"Then why do you wander around the country, begging your living?"

"Why, I'm looking round in hopes of a job."

"Very well, it is still early morning. My uncle has a pile of wood out there, and all are so busy in the fields that no one can spare time to cut it. There is a good ax in the woodshed, and if you work well until dinner-time, you may feel that you have earned that and fair pay in money beside."

"A poor man, uncle, who has been working even so hard! You must give me some money to pay my tax!"

"The brush started, and a black cloud of vagabonds rose to the ceiling, leaving six members swimming in the milk."

"Heck! it hurts 'em as much as us folks to get drowned," said Mr. Vane, helping the poor strugglers out. "And what fetched the man here, Ruthie? Pass the lassus, I see we are most out of 'em."

"Yes, uncle, but aunt will bring some from town. O, the man was hungry, and I gave him a job."

"Good for you! he's working right smart. I was afeared your aunt would have come to look. Come, boys, short nooning! Here, Ruthie, pay your man well, and keep the change!"

Ruthie tucked the bill in a little Chinaman's cup, and bethought herself that she didn't need any change. And the human vagabond at his dinner, eyed by the insect vagabonds, then slouched back to his work so the clattering clattering of his feet kept time in their noisy toilet with the busy ax outside.

Work done, kitchen bright and shining, and Ruthie, in pink dress, pinker cheeks, and hair with its golden lights, stood waiting at the door for her good aunt to come up the lane.

"Johnny's taken the mare round to fetch Mrs. White her flour, O, Ruthie! I ain't warm for Fall! How've you been, Ruthie?"

"Here, auntie, sit down where it's cool."

"Gracious, Ruthie, who's out to the woodpile?"

"Oh, auntie, the poorest man you ever did see! He has six children and the oldest is only six. Well, they had to eat all their chairs and tables, they were so hungry! But they couldn't get off their boots when the feather bed was soiled—no, I mean the boot-jacks roasted! And his oldest daughter—dresses in blankets, and is going to be married, so I gave her my blue ribbon! He's got the rheumatism, so he can't stir—can't hardly stir!"

"Ruthie Vane, are you out of your senses? The oldest child only eight, and going to get married! Eat boot-jacks, indeed! If you ain't for all the world like your uncle! Ails begins so fierce, too? Where is that critter?"

"Oh, auntie, do sit down," whispered Ruthie, in a giggle. "He's coming to the well, for a drink of water, and he's so sensitive he put down his head every time he talked to me. Don't send him away, please—until I pay him."

And away went pink dress and little gaiter boots to the cupboard. But all china cups looked alike, and right on top of Ruthie's bill was nestled a bright, innocent-looking one, but empty as an egg-shell after the inside has gone of course.

So little fingers were still poking amid the laughing cups, when came a quick step and a red, excited face.

"Oh, Ruthie, Ruthie Vane! and a plump fellow beat time to each word, 'do you know what you've done and done? Ruth Vane, did you ever hear me tell of Mr. Atkire, what owns this farm, what lives in the city, and is a lawyer, and is rich, and what is a bachelor, too? Did you ever hear me tell of him, and how when he comes out a hunting, and gets tired and hungry, and maybe tired and dirty, you miserable little girl, you'd go to the well, and get him a drink of water, and he'd be so sensitive he put down his head every time he talked to me. Don't send him away, please—until I pay him.'"

"I don't care! I don't care!" and Ruthie, giving the cupboard door a slam that set all the rough china cups a shaking in dismay, rushed past her aunt, crying, with scarlet cheeks to a pair of mischievous black eyes, "I hate him!" and ran up to her own room.

got in your hair, miss—I've heard on them." "No, indeed!" and with a little rippling laugh, Ruthie handed him the bill opened rose.

"Way, don't you see? It's a flower." "Well, well, do tell me!" and the pale nose buried itself deep in the rose. "This is the way flower grows. I always thought it was made out of oats, some-times out of corn. Smells sweet. Something like onions, maybe?"

And the sun riding slowly, grandly up the blue arch above, did not check his chariot's stately course, but sent down warm-beamed messengers to warn the two mortals by the woodpile of his march. "Dear, dear," cried Ruthie, jumping up at last; "I must go easy for dinner. Won't you come in and sit on the porch? I fear you are working too hard."

"I'll gather up my old bones and rest a while."

So the old bones, sustained by a pair of very good boots, followed her nimbly in, and stretched upon the porch, their possessor amused himself by watching Ruthie getting dinner.

Perhaps those curious eyes had never seen so neat a little girl before as this one, who, in a clean calico, round her neck, blue ribbons and shining hair, darted around the great clean kitchen.

Perhaps all they had been of young ladies and been a glimpse through the parlor windows, of dainty-looking angels clad in flowing robes, who seemed perpetually riveted to the piano-stool, or velvet couches, like wax dolls on exhibition. So perhaps when dinner steamed temptingly on the stove, the white-robed table stood waiting for the men, and a tinkle of music came from the parlor, they may excuse this man who crept up to the open window, and peeped through the muslin curtains at Ruthie, "cooling off" and drawing ripples of sweet music from the old piano.

She gave a start at sight of the slouch hat.

"Beg your pardon, marm," said the owner, "but could I wait until after the men folks have eaten? I ain't used to the like of me to sit and be poked run at."

"O, indeed!" said Ruthie, earnestly "no one here would do that—but you can wait if you would rather."

"By Jove," said he, to himself, as he stole another look at her sweet face, "I don't go and cut the whole of that wood-pile. She makes a fellow ashamed of himself."

The fire buzzed impatiently as the great brush made of paper strips waved slowly to and fro; but through all their hum, the rustling of the brush, and the clatter of the dishes, came a steady chop! chop! chop! from the wood-pile.

"Who've you got out, you Ruthie? My, what a heap of fire! I ought to be 'been pined!' and Mr. Vane pushed over his plate for some more corn and potatoes! The paper seemed its rustling, and for one blissful moment, unwelcome guests tasted of Ruthie's dinner."

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But Miss Ruthie sailed down the next morning, and finding Mr. Atkire settled in the house or some time could not do otherwise than be agreeable.

And when she found that his arms were strong, and his legs but willing and used to work, spite of well-filled purses, she could not do otherwise than like him.

And when he said:

lawyer of Washington, D. C., annoyed beyond endurance with the worthless mass of black horses, determined to substitute a white maid for her little children, and from the many candidates presenting themselves, she chose a very pretty girl from Alexandria, whose recommendations were *au fait*, and who looked still prettier in her white ruffled apron and bonnet cap, and her mother's heart was proudly happy as the little ones took their airing under so charming an escort. After the novelty had worn off, Virginia drooped, and did not seem contented, and electrified her mistress one morning by informing her that she would leave when her month was out.

"Don't you like the children?" inquired the lady.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do you think you have too much to do?" pressed the mistress.

"No, ma'am."

"Don't you get on with the other servants?" persisted the mistress.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do tell me why you are dissatisfied, Virginia, and perhaps I can remedy it," insisted the lady.

"I have no fault to find with the place, ma'am; but I'd rather live where I receive more attention from the gentlemen of the family than I do here."

"Attend! what do you mean, girl?" snapped the mistress.

"Why, when I lived with Mrs. F., Mr. F. always came into the nursery mornings to kiss the children, and he would come behind the washbasin and screen and kiss me, too. And I ain't been kissed once in this house."

That girl is still looking for a place.

Parents, mothers, nurses, do not fall to give Dr. Hall's Cough Syrup to the little ones, for all cases of coughs and colds. Only costs 25 cents.

The desert of Sahara covers 2,700,000 square miles. This is an enormous amount of territory, which engineers think of turning into a great inland sea, by letting in the Atlantic Ocean. It is equal in area to two-thirds of the United States; but can never be of value until its shores are lined with white sugar plantations use B. T. Babbitt's Best Soap.

The Grand Central Hotel, New York, has adopted the railroad plan of "rates," and announces a reduction from \$4 to \$2.50 and \$3 per day.

Important to Persons Visiting New York or the Centennial.

Grand Union Hotel, opposite Grand Central Depot. Baggage taken from this depot to Hotel free. 350 elegant rooms. Elevator. European plan Restaurant, supplied with the best. Prices moderate. Cars and stages pass this Hotel for all parts of the city, and to Philadelphia Depot for Centennial.

ROBARK'S PILLS.—Way are they the best pills in the market? Because they are reliable, safe and efficient. Fully the blood, regulate the liver and digestive organs, relieve the painful headaches caused by indigestion. For sale by Druggists everywhere.

PHOSPHORENE.—Don't place this article in your rat-holes—or place they frequent. If you do you will lose your rats; there will be numerous rat funerals.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BABIES OF CINCINNATI.—Auntie!—Comic Monthly, 10 cts., at all news stands, tell-tell.

STANDARD SCROLL BOOK. Just out, has 300 designs and ideas invaluable to all artists. 25 cts. Of any book store or JESSE HANEY & CO., 119 Nassau St., N.Y. Tell-tell.

GILDERMAN'S MANUAL.—A complete practical guide adapted to all trades using gold and silver, and other valuable material. Just out. 30c. Of any book seller.

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